

## CHAPTER - 1

# NOW MEETA KNOWS

Meeta was silent after coming from school. Lying on the bed, she was thinking about something. Mother asked, What happened Meeta ? Why did you immediately go to bed after taking meal ? Why aren't you going out to play today?

**Brother :** I am thinking the same. Usually she goes to play without taking meal. What happened today ?

**Meeta :** Today is 19th November; 'World day for Prevention of Child Abuse' was celebrated in our school.

**Brother :** 'World day for Prevention of Child Abuse' ! What is that ? I have heard about children's day, which is celebrated on 14th November. I know about that.

**Mother :** Meeta, tell me also. I also want to know about this.

**Meeta :** Today, we were shown a movie.

**Brother :** Wow! How was that movie?

**Meeta :** In the movie, there was a young boy named Raju. One of his relatives used to come to his house frequently. Whenever he found Raju to be alone, he used to touch him his body in a bad manner, caress or try to kiss him.

**Brother :** In a bad manner? What does that mean?

**Meeta :** Infact, Raju did not like his touch or his caressing or his affection. Whenever he would come to their house, Raju tried to hide or run away to save himself.

**Brother :** Poor Raju ! What happened next, Meeta?

**Meeta :** Yes brother, that relative was so bad that whenever he found Raju alone, he immediately took hold of him. Many times he also tempted Raju with chocolates, sweets or ice-creams.

**Brother :** Yes, Meeta you are telling the truth. I have also seen a program on television where a man like this threatens a young boy, takes along and also tells him , " This is just between you and me, don't tell anyone."

**Meeta :** Yes brother, the same was happening with Raju in the movie also.

**Mother :** But Meeta; Did Raju's parents know all this ? Did Raju not tell them?

- Meeta :** Mother, Raju had informed them but they neither believed nor paid any attention toward this.
- Brother :** What did Raju do then, Meeta?
- Meeta :** Out of anxiety, Raju informed his teacher. Then the teacher spoke with Raju's parents and explained the matter to them.
- Brother :** Explained ! Explained what ?
- Meeta :** Raju's teacher told that most of the time parents and other elders of the family feel that it is not necessary to believe or pay attention to what children say because they have a notion that nothing bad could happen to their children at home. But the fact is that unpleasant incidents can happen anywhere with children.
- Mother :** Yes Meeta; Raju's teacher is absolutely correct. It can happen to any child at any time, at any place in any country or any part of the world.
- Brother :** Can it happen to boys too?
- Meeta :** No brother, It was also told in the movie that this can happen to any child whether it is a boy or a girl. you know, I have a friend named Nisha. She told that there was an uncle in her neighbourhood who used to do the same kind of things with her and did not listen even though she objected. That is when she informed her parents about it. They scolded him a lot. Another girl named Rani said that one of her teachers who was also the manager of the hostel, had misbehaved similarly with many girls. All the girls went against him so strongly that he was terminated from the school.
- Brother :** What did Raju's teacher do next?
- Meeta :** He advised Raju's parents that they should inform the police about the man.
- Brother :** Wow ! So did they do as advised ?
- Meeta :** Yes brother, at the end of the movie that relative was handed over to the police.
- Mother :** Yes son. It is very necessary that every parent, teachers and elders pay attention to what children have to say. They should also assure them that they completely believe them and they will always take care of their safety.
- Brother :** Yes mother, it is only then that children will share their problems with the elders without any hesitation. But what more can the children do to save themselves from such problems?

**Meeta :** Brother, after watching the movie, there was a discussion in the school. Our teacher told us that whatever is happening can happen with any other girl or boy. So, to save themselves from such problems, children should pay attention to certain things.

**Brother :** Okay ! What are those things ?

**Meeta :** No one can touch our body without our permission. Most importantly three parts of our body - Chest, thighs front/back and in between both the legs. These are the parts whose safety is more important. If anybody touches or tries to touch these parts, they should not be allowed to do so.

**Mother :** But Meeta, while taking bath, if parents or anyone whom we trust, clean those parts, we should not feel bothered.

**Brother :** Meeta ! I have seen in pictures that even early man used to cover these parts with leaves. But now we wear clothes to cover them.

**Meeta :** Yes brother, our teacher told us that while facing all such problems we should not get scared. We must have courage and just do 4 things scream, push, go away and tell.

**Brother :** Scream, push, go away and tell ! What are these ? Please explain it, Meeta.

### **Point to pay attention**

1. Protest : Object to it if anyone touches, caresses or kisses body parts like chest, thighs, cheeks etc.
2. Grievance : Such objectionable behaviour should be reported to parents or teachers immediately without any hesitation.
3. Use of helpline : If needed, dial child helpline number 1098 and ensure that the culprits are punished.

**Meeta :** Yes brother, I'll explain. 'Scream' means if any one touches those parts of our body and if we don't like it then we should object and scream out loudly saying - 'NO'  
'Push and go away' means to scream and push away the person with all your strength and go away from that person.

'Tell' means to inform parents, teachers or people who truly love us or whom we trust.

**Brother :** But what if there is no one around ?

**Mother :** Son, I have read somewhere that if needed the child can also dial the child help line number 1098. They can get immediate help.

**Brother :** That's so good ! I will definitely inform my friends about this so that they can also protect themselves in times of need.

In the mean while Meeta's friend Heena entered and Meeta happily went out to play with her.

Is anything like this happening to us or around us? Discuss in your class.

### EXERCISE

1. When is world day for prevention of child abuse celebrated?
2. To whom would you complain about the bad behaviour and misconduct of others?
3. What are the four things you would do to save yourself from the bad behaviour and misconduct of others?
4. Write down the child helpline number.
5. What are the circumstances in which we can use the child helpline number?

